STORIES OF ALL SORTS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 340. FOR WEEK ENDING JULY 6, 1895. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

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SHORT STORIES.

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 340.] FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 6, 1895. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

The Enchanted Necklace

My father was an officer in the British army, my mother an Italian lady. The latter dying a few months after my birth, and my father's regiment being about the same time ordered off to India, I was taken in charge by my paternal grandmother, living on her estate in Somersetshire. In this sheltered seclusion I remained for eighteen years, when my grandmother died suddenly of heart disease, and I was sent out to India under the care of a minister's wife who had been home on a visit.

I was a slip of a girl, with a paucity of worldly experience which made me appear pathetically childlike. Physically and mentally I had been about equally endowed by both parents, and, in consequence, was made up of strange contradictions and startling contrasts. My golden-brown hair and fair complexion inherited from my father accentuated my classic features and large, dark eyes, which came from my mother; while my impulsive, warm-hearted Italian temperament was modified by a thin stratum of English reserve, making my moods as variable as the wind, which bloweth where it listeth. They gave to my manners a hint of fickleness, more apparent than real.

I had never seen my father nor his family, and felt fully what I was, a stranger in a strange land, my heart torn and bleeding from the wrench given it at parting from all I knew or loved. I stood on deck like one spell-bound, when I felt myself encircled by a pair of strong arms, while a deep, sonorous voice was saying in my ear: "My daughter, welcome to India," and, swinging round, I beheld my father, a middle-aged, soldierly man, with iron-grey side-whiskers and a sun-tanned visage.

He conducted me to his victoria (the only familiar-looking object I saw, and even this had native coachman and footman), and we were bowled rapidly along the smooth streets, whose quaint scenes with kaleidoscopic change flashed past us, out into the suburbs, along a line of Parsee residences, with their white walls and brilliant flower-beds, up on Malabar Hill, where my father's bungalow sat in a grove of tamarind trees, some distance from the road.

On the low, vine-draped verandah stood my step-mother, with her children, waiting to welcome me. She was a washed-out looking little woman, indolent and amiable, evidently a victim to the enervating climate, and her three children—all girls, and aged respectively nine, six, and three—bore a striking resemblance to her.

Her greeting was not lacking in cordiality, but the little ones drew back in round-eyed wonder, regarding me as though I were some strange animal. The look on their faces brought a sob to my throat, and oppressed me with a feeling of intrusion and superfluity. It seemed impossible for me to take the stamp of my new environments, and adjust myself to an insignificant rôle—I, who had been all my life the central figure and spoiled darling of my grandmother's household.

We were playing with her three Persian kittens.

I lived exclusively on fruits and boiled eggs—for palate and stomach alike rebelled at the curried dishes which at first I vainly essayed to eat, with the tears streaming down my cheeks to the no small amusement of the children, and disgust of the servants, who regarded as a personal insult my inability to appreciate the native cuisine.

From the soft-voiced ayah, who had charge of the nursery, down, through the different grades, to the old punkah-puller, squatting all day in the basement, and jerking the cord which kept in motion the fans about the house, I was made to feel an alien.

Like the Queen of Sheba before King Solomon, there was no more spirit in me.

"Send me a cobra stone by Bentley. He is ill, and is coming home on furlough," my school chum, Caroline Rochester, had said as she kissed me good-bye at parting.

Bentley was her brother—a captain in the cavalry. On the third day after my arrival I was sitting on the matting-covered floor of the library with Dorothea, the youngest child, who evinced a growing fondness for me. We were playing with her three Persian kittens, curled up on my lap like fluffy white pompons, when Captain Rochester was announced.

He was six-and-twenty (I had learned this from Caroline), tall and slender, with languid, thoroughbred, *nonchalant* manners, very white teeth, a blonde moustache, chestnut hair, and earnest grey eyes, fringed with dark lashes; but

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Pausing often to inspect the novelties.

he was too emaciated to be even moderately good-looking.

I suppose it was our unconventional introduction and his relationship to Caroline that took away the constraint of a first meeting. Besides, he had been in India but a few months, and his easy reference to people and places that I knew was like balm to my aching heart. I was soon babbling to him with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, while Dorothea and the kittens climbed about over our knees. "Have you ever taken the walk through the woods to the beach?" he asked, when he had exhausted home topics.

"No," I replied, all my discontent surging back, "I have never left the house since I entered it. I am afraid."

"Afraid? Why, what are you afraid of?" he queried, with an amused look on his face.

"Tigers, and lions, and snakes, and—and—everything." The ready tears sprang to my eyes as I continued hotly: "Oh, I hate this country! I shall never, never feel at home here!"

"What a child you are—not much older than Dolly," he said, softly, as he leant over to pull her tip-tilted nose. "Why, there's no more danger of wild animals in this part of India than there is in England—a few snakes, perhaps, but they are timid and keep out of the way. You will feel differently when the strangeness of it all wears off." Pressing my hand encouragingly as he rose to go, he added, "But you must get out, where you will see many things to divert you."

In compliance with Captain Rochester's suggestion, I asked permission of my stepmother to drive into the city the next day shopping. She readily consented upon condition that I would excuse her from going, and take the ayah and Dorothea instead, adding as an afterthought, that I must be careful to avoid exposure to the sun, as it would be apt to bring on fever.

As soon as tiffin was over, we started. The top of the victoria was thrown back, for the sun shone fitfully, and clouds looming up from the ocean horizon portended rain.

We drove through the copper bazaar, but when we came to the flight of stone steps, leading down to the ancient town, we abandoned the carriage and proceeded on foot, pausing often to inspect the novelties that met us at every turn.

Just as we left a Chinese shop with its, pervasive odours, and were shaking our heads discouragingly at the almond-eyed Celestial standing bowing before us, and repeating persuasively: "Wantee anytling aday?" a sudden shower poured down. We scurried into the next door, where copper and brass vases, jars, and bowls were piled in artistic confusion.

Hearing a laughing ejaculation, I looked round, and my heart gave a leap which sent the blood to my neck and face, as I saw Captain Rochester standing in the room shaking the rain-drops from his hat. "I learnt from your *gari-mala* that you were in the town, and just caught a glimpse of you as you vanished in here," he explained, taking my hand, and kissing Dorothea.

Just then, remembering Caroline's request for a cobra stone, I asked our host if he could supply one. He hobbled to his feet with an alacrity which I should have thought impossible to one of his cumbersome dignity, and disappeared into an inner room. Hastily returning, he placed before me a small lacquer box, and with folded arms stood watching me keenly. But the ayah had thrown herself on her knees at my side, and with rolling eyes and trembling voice implored, "Don't buy them Missus, don't buy 'em. They devil-stones, an' bring bad luck," and she tried to take the box from me.

"They will not harm me. I am not superstitious," I said, defiantly, shaking off her detaining hand, and, opening the lid, I saw several small, yellow, semi-transparent pebbles, oval in shape, with flattened sides, lying imbedded in a nest of cotton.

"Is it true that the cobra de capello carries these stones in its mouth?" I asked of Captain Rochester, who was teasing Dollie.

"Yes," he replied, as he picked up the largest stone, and, turning it idly in his hand, continued, dreamily, "if tested by psychomancy, what tales of horror these innocent-looking pebbles might reveal of the jungle and death." He laughingly placed it against my brow, at which the ayah uttered a piercing shriek, and, seizing Dorothea in her arms, rushed to the door, and even I drew back with a feeling of awe. Recovering myself by an effort I pushed the box out of reach and persisted, deeply interested: "Tell me all about them. Of what use are they to the snake?"

"The most rational theory, I think," he said, absently twirling his moustache, "is that the cobras use them as decoys. The stone is a rare variety of fluor-spar, found in dry river-beds. It emits in the dark—especially when previously warmed—a greenish, phosphorescent light. Now the cobra has a peculiar fondness for a diet of fire-flies, and by coiling itself in the grass with the *najá-kallu* near, the fire-flies swarm round it in numbers, being easily deceived by its resemblance to the glow-worm, which, you know, is the female of the fire-fly, but crawls upon the ground, having only rudimentary wings. In this way the cobra obtains an easy supply of food, and will defend the stone with its life."

"But why is the ayah so afraid of them?" I asked, looking to where she stood with an ashen face, muttering rapidly to herself in Hindustanee.

"Oh, the natives have a superstition that their light comes from the spirit of those the cobra has killed, and that it grows dim if not supplied with fresh victims, which is an easy task, since there is no known antidote to the bite of the cobra."

"What a dreadful country to live in!" I said with a shudder, as he extended his hand to assist me to my feet.

I paid thirty rupees for three of the largest stones, and we crossed the street to a jeweller's, who agreed to polish and attach them as pendants to a delicate filigree necklace of silver, which I selected.

The sun was setting when we reached the victoria, and Captain Rochester, taking the seat at my side, with Dorothea

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on his knee, ordered the *gari-mala* to drive to the fort, that we might hear the band play. My eyes welled over with tears when the soft strains of "Annie Laurie" throbbed and swelled on the pulsing air.

"This looks like a bad case of home-sickness," said Captain Rochester, with sympathetic inflections of voice, as he laid his hand an instant tenderly over mine, behind Dollie's little plump back, and out of range of the ayah's sharp eyes, and, though my tears continued to flow, I do not think they were those of sadness. At the park gate Captain Rochester mounted his horse, which the groom was leading, and rode back to the city.

The following day the necklace was delivered, and I was fascinated with its quaintness. Half-an-hour before dinner I clasped it about my neck, and went into the library to write to Caroline an account of it. My father sat reading his paper, while Mildred, the second child, played with her blocks on the floor. From some indefinable cause, I suddenly raised my eyes, and found my father intently regarding me.

"Your mother was a very beautiful woman, my dear, and you are strikingly like her," he said feelingly. "Won't you come and sit by me?" There was an expression on his face which I had never seen before, and his eyes were full of retrospection.

"Ah, first love is strongest and best after all," sang my happy heart, as I hastened to him; but Mildred, pert and officious as usual, anticipated me by throwing herself in his arms, and, while she motioned me away, showered kisses on his face, crying:

"He is my papa! He is my papa!"

I returned to the desk—my father resumed his paper and mask of reserve, and never again was it lifted between us. After dark we sat on the gallery, when the *najá-kallu*, warmed by my neck, gave forth a lovely light, which terrified the servants, who all shared the ayah's belief in its sinister omen.

When I went to my room, I laid the necklace on my dressing-table and stood threading my white fingers through the meshes of my golden hair, as I gazed at myself in the mirror, with my father's words in my mind. Perhaps I was really beautiful. It seemed to me that I looked different from the girl I had been in England. A new feeling had certainly come over me, but I did not wish nor attempt to analyse it. That night my sleep was fitful and disturbed, and half-waking, half-dreaming, I heard gliding noises about my room, with the faint, resonant click of metal. When the ayah came in the morning to bring my little cup of black Mocha coffee, she found me up and dressed, instead of asleep as usual.

I did not think of my necklace until after breakfast, and then when I went to look for it, it was nowhere to be found. Sadi, the young Hindoo man who did the chamber-work, when questioned, denied most earnestly having seen it, which, however, failed to convince the *consarmi* of his innocence, judging from the sound of blows and yells, which afterwards proceeded from the stable-yard. My father employed a native detective, who assured him that the necklace would be restored in a short time.

Three weeks had waxed and waned since I reached India, and during the time I had seen Captain Rochester almost daily. But the easy familiarity of our intercourse was succeeded by a certain constraint, which jarred like a discord; and often, when I suddenly raised my eyes, I found his fixed upon me with melancholy intentness. For four days his visits had been discontinued altogether, without any assignable cause, and I grew restless and miserable. Next week he would leave for England, and might bring back a wife on his return. I was too much of a child, too undisciplined, to dissemble. When I was hurt I cried out like any other savage.

In a heedless, desultory way I strolled through the park out into the dusty road. How funereal the passing black-topped *shegrams!* How suffocating the air! I hurried on towards the beach, when, turning a sharp curve, where the road hugged the bank, as though dizzy at the precipitous depths below, I saw Captain Rochester coming towards me, his head bent down, and flicking the pebbles out of his path with a small cane. Returning health was transforming him into a remarkably handsome man. He had not seen me, and I would not force my company upon him. With my heart beating like a sledge-hammer I stepped behind a rock for concealment, when a large lizard darted across my feet, and I sprang back. I bit my lips in chagrin at my cowardice, but the action was unconscious and automatic. In an instant he was at my side, holding my hands with such a glad, happy look in his honest grey eyes.

"Where are you wandering to, all by yourself?" he asked, retaining my hands.

"Oh, I started out for a little stroll, but that nasty lizard has frightened me so that I believe I'll turn back," I said petulantly.

"Those lizards look formidable, but are harmless," he replied, smiling at my vehemence, as he poked about in the leaves until it ran away.

Still I stood irresolute, for I was suddenly confronted with the fear that, if I went home, he could do nothing less than accompany me, and thus I should make his visit compulsory.

"Let us sit here a while," he said, selecting for me a smooth stone, and seating himself on a gnarled root by my side. A soft breeze was blowing across the purple ocean—blowing from the direction of my home. I turned my face towards it, and held out my arms longingly.

Gazed at myself in the mirror.

"Do you love England so much?" he asked, softly, while the troubled look came back to his eyes.

"I would give my life to return to it," I answered, choking back a sob.

"And do you think you will never grow reconciled to India?" he queried, gently.

"I would not live here, if I had any choice in the matter—not if you made me empress of the whole country," I answered with an aggressive tilt of the chin. The consciousness that I was appearing at a disadvantage added to my irritation, and made me say things that went like dagger-thrusts to my own heart.

"As this is your father's home, your only chance of escape is to marry some man who can take you away" he said, as though thinking aloud.

"Yes," I responded recklessly, driven to bay by his cool

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assumption of such a possibility. "Yes, I would marry an ogre to escape from this country."

Then he rose, and we walked slowly through the gathering twilight, the moon appearing like a fairy boat in a luminous archipelago of stars.

"Ah, what a large and brilliant glow-worm!" I exclaimed, pointing to the dark shadow of a date-tree, standing in front of the bungalow. "After what you have told me about them, I must certainly examine it," and I started on a run to the spot, when, with a cry of horror, Captain Rochester seized me in his arms, and bore me back to a young palm. He put me on my feet, and leant trembling against its slender stem.

"What is it? What is the matter?" I screamed, clinging to him, for he still kept his arm about my waist, and strained me to him with a pressure that was painful.

"There! There!" he gasped, with his eyes fixed on the date tree. "Oh, my darling, you were walking straight into the jaws of death!"

"Where? How?" I faltered.

"That is no glow-worm, little one. It is a *najâ-kallu*, and the cobra is not far distant. See, its light is continuous, and that of the glow-worm is intermittent. My God! what an escape you have had!" and overcome by his emotions, he folded me to his heart, kissing passionately my lips and eyes. "Ah, you will dislike India more than ever now!" he said, this thought ever prominent in his mind.

But I was wildly, deliriously happy, after my depression and fright, for a new light had dawned upon me, and I saw the cross-purposes at which we had been playing.

"I don't dislike India—I love it," I whispered, hiding my burning face on his breast.

"Did the Sahib call?" asked the old *consarmi*, standing before us, but discreetly turning his head to cough in his hand.

"I would marry an ogre to escape from this country."

The *consarmi*, like all native servants, seemed ubiquitous, and had a habit of appearing and disappearing most unaccountably.

"Get me your master's pistol, quick! There is a cobra under that tree," said Captain Rochester, pointing to the star-like glimmer in the grass.

Contrary to his usual alacrity when given an order, the *consarmi* stood as though paralysed.

"It is the devil-snake, and his *najâ-kallu!* Don't shoot, sahib!" he panted with chattering teeth. "Hindoo fix him. Make him kill hisse'f—you see," and, without awaiting permission, he disappeared round the bungalow.

"What does he mean? I don't understand," I asked.

"It's only another of their superstitions," Captain Rochester replied. "They believe if the cobra is killed that another will come to avenge his death, but if it can be made to commit suicide the evil power of the stone is overcome. I am glad you will have an opportunity of witnessing their jugglery."

We sat down on a garden-seat in the white moonlight, with our hearts too full for words. The cobra was now distinctly visible, in a brown coil, with its head waving slowly to and fro above the stone, as it skilfully snapped up the fire-flies that came within its reach. Soon the *consarmi* returned, with all the men about the stables and house, each with his arms full of cocoanut fibre, which they noiselessly heaped in a circle about the date-tree, and then commenced to sway their bodies and chant in a low voice, while some boys sat at their backs, and beat loudly on tom-toms.

It was a weird, truly Oriental scene. The night-winds rustling the tall palm-tops, the half-clad natives, with their barbaric incantations, and the death-dealing cobra before its shining stone, no longer heeding the fire-flies, but apparently hypnotised, and keeping perfect time with its head to the strokes of the tom-toms.

At a signal from the *consarmi*, the cocoanut fire was ignited, the tom-toms were beaten furiously, and the chant arose to almost a shriek. My father and mother, attracted by the noise, drew near, while the ayah ran about, madly tossing her arms and shouting: "A devil-snake! A devil-snake!"

The cobra, at the first flash of the flames, raised its terrible crest, striking out blindly in its rage, as it circled round and round the stone. As the din increased, and the fire leaped higher, it seized the *najâ-kallu* in its mouth, and made a dash to escape. Time and again it tried, but was driven back by the heat, when in a seeming frenzy of despair it dropped the stone, stuck its fangs into its own body, and, with a convulsive quiver, stretched itself out, dead.

There then went up a triumphant shout, in which we joined, and Sadi, who had been flogged for stealing my necklace, sprang into the circle, clutched the now harmless stone, and laid it at my feet. Imagine my surprise at finding that it was my lost necklace, and that the cobra had been the thief. The snake was an unusually large one, and had possibly lived about the house for years, feeding on mice. It undoubtedly gained access to my room through a rat-hole in the floor.

A week later, when the *Alexandria* steamed out of port, bound for England, I stood on deck at my husband's side, waving a brief adieu to India, and in my trunk, packed in soft cotton, was coiled the *najâ-kallu* necklace, for Caroline.

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The Voice of Fate

EIGHT years ago I was foreman in the Carnford powder works.

It was a dangerous situation, and not altogether as pleasant as it might have been. But the salary was larger than I could obtain in any other place just then, and this, to a man with an invalid mother and a little sister to support, was no mean object. Besides I hoped at no very distant day to have a home of my own, presided over by the girl of my choice—beautiful Marion Ware. This dream of happiness in the future made me better contented with my life. I was willing to work for a competence that she would share with me.

We were to be married in November, and as the time drew near an intense desire seized me to escape from the momentous, dangerous existence I led in the mills. A few weeks would make no difference to my employers, I thought, and so when I gave my notice to leave I gave it for the 14th of September instead of November, as I had first intended.

My employers were very sorry to part with me, and they offered to raise my salary, but I had decided and was not to be turned from my decision. The last day of my stay passed quietly enough, and at night I left the dark buildings behind me with a thrill of relief.

That was a happy evening. Marion had been spending the afternoon with my mother, and I had walked home with her, and it was near midnight when I got home. Soon after I fell asleep, but my rest was troubled. I supposed I must have been dreaming, but it seemed a vivid reality to me then.

I was standing in the thick forest which surrounded the works, at the very point where the path to the village diverged and led it over the hill and through the field to the mills. There was a struggle in my mind; I thought I could not decide which path to take—the one leading into the distant village, or the old accustomed one to the mills. While I was sitting I heard a voice, clear, solemn and strong, that seemed to come from the ends of the earth, and it said:

"Go to the mills! Your work is not yet finished."

I awoke. The moon was shining coldly in at the window, and the great arms of the elms moved slowly to and fro in the night wind. I lay down again, thinking of little but my dream, save to rejoice that it was only a dream, and shortly after I fell asleep.

Again was that vision repeated with singular minuteness, circumstance for circumstance, and again I awoke. I thought it extremely remarkable that I should dream twice on the same matter, but explained it to myself that I had been thinking so much of my departure from the mills. It was a coincidence, nothing more, I said, and turning over I soon lost my consciousness.

For the third time that dream visited me, and this repetition was almost frightfully vivid. Everything about it bore so strongly the semblance of reality that I started up covered with cold perspiration.

I tried to shake off the spell that was on my spirit, but in vain.

I rose, and dressing myself went down to work in the garden. I was restless and uneasy, labouring under a consciousness of some duty unfulfilled.

At last I put down my hoe and went into the house. I put on my mill clothes and sought my mother. She looked up in surprise as I said:

"Mother, I am going to the mills."

"Indeed! I had hoped you were done going there, Edward. Yesterday was the fourteenth, was it not?"

"Yes; but I feel obliged to go to-day. My work is not yet done; it will be finished soon, I think."

I kissed her and went out. At the door of the grinding mill I met Mr. Morton, the senior proprietor. He grasped my hand eagerly.

"Ah, Green, glad to see you! What's this I hear about your leaving us? Lincoln was speaking about it last night. Why, we couldn't part with you at all."

"I did give notice to leave last night, and intended yesterday for my last day in the mill; but circumstances have decided me to remain some time longer—a month perhaps."

"Right; only you must set no time."

"Thank you; I will think of it," I said, and went on with my duties as usual.

Everything went quietly on in its accustomed routine. I began to smile at the absurdity of my last night's vision. "I had eaten too much supper; stayed out too long whispering soft nothings to Marion," I said to myself.

Towards night a party of visitors arrived. Such things were frequent. I went out to meet the party and to assist them in changing their shoes and garments that might have buttons of any metallic substance, for it was one of the cardinal regulations that no persons should be allowed in the interior mills who had a particle of metal about them, or nails in their shoes, for the fear of combustion by friction.

Our visitors were two gentlemen and three ladies. The two elder ladies I did not notice particularly, but the younger one attracted me in spite of myself. Why, I didn't know. She was not really beautiful—Marion was much more brilliant—but there was something about her better than beauty.

The gay company, laughing and joking, and bantering each other in regard to their fear, followed me in. The lady in blue walked quietly by my side, saying very little, barely replying to the lively sallies of her companions—perhaps she thought it ill-timed mirth; I don't know.

We had been all the rounds and had returned to the reception room, next to the drying room, at one end of the main building. This apartment overhung the pond, from whence came our supply of water, the basin of which was formed of a large dark gorge in the hollow of the wooded hills. There was a large swinging door opening from the room directly over the pond for the convenience of casting out rubbish, and this door I threw open for the visitors to obtain a view of the prospect beyond.

They soon tired of this, all but the lady in blue, who still stood looking out over the dreary scene, lighted by the departing rays of the lurid sun.

Suddenly I heard a low, ominous hiss from the adjoining apartment, a sound which once heard is always remembered; my blood turned to ice in my veins.

I recognised my fate—in another second's time we should be in eternity.

I snatched the woman by my side and plunged through the gaping doorway. Simultaneously a deafening roar burst upon my head. Down, down we went, it seemed, to an interminable depth, but that plunge saved us.

When we came up everything was still. A deathly silence had fallen on all nature—the place reeked with a suffocating smoke, rolling up in clouds from the ruins, dumb as the vapour of death.

I swam to the shore with my companion and supported her up the bank. She was not unconscious. Her dress was drenched with blood. I lifted my arm to seek the wound, and saw that the crimson tide flowed not from her veins, but from the mutilated stump where once belonged my own right hand. It had been blown off.

I went home as one in a walking dream. I remember very little of it except that the lady in blue was with me, and that

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she talked soothingly to me in a sweet voice, and that afterwards, when I suffered untold agonies from some sharp instrument, she stood by me with words of gentle rest and peace; after that, all was blank.

There was a little snow on the hills that I could see from the window. When I awoke to consciousness I spoke my first thought, "Where is Marion?" Mother tried to put me off with an evasive answer, but I would know the whole truth. She told it to me with great reluctance.

Marion had not been to see me since the day of the accident, and then at the sight of me she uttered a shriek of horror and fled from the room.

"But has she brought no message?"

"There is a note, but you must not read it till you are better. You have been eight weeks delirious, and the excitement may be fatal."

"Give me the letter," I said, with all my stern self-will in my voice. "If not, I will get up and seek it myself."

She brought it to me, the delicate, rose-perfumed thing, no more heartless than she who dictated it. It was elegantly got up altogether.

Miss Ware sympathised with me deeply—hoped and trusted I would be restored to health, and ended in releasing me from my engagement. She prayed I might be granted resignation, and closed by saying she was my most sincere and attached friend.

I crushed this scroll in my hand. I would have ground it to powder—annihilated its very dust from the face of the earth if I could.

Every day there was a fresh bouquet of hothouse flowers on the little stand by the bedside. After awhile I began to feel curious about them. I asked my mother where they came from.

"Miss Gaylord sent them."

"Miss Gaylord? I know no such person."

"The young lady you saved from the explosion. She is a Miss Adele Gaylord, and to her you owe an everlasting debt of gratitude, Edward. I often think she saved your life, for when you raved in delirium and would have torn off the bandages from your head when the surgeon had trepanned your wound, she alone had the power to quiet you."

Miss Gaylord called in several times during the next three weeks.

How beautiful she was to me now!

By the first of December I was able to sit up most of the time and go out a little.

One clear starlight night my mother left me for the first time during my illness. I brightened the fire on the hearth, drew up a great armchair and sat down to a quiet hour of dreaming. At the moment the door opened softly and Adele Gaylord came in.

Blushing and hesitating at seeing me alone, wrapped up in rich furs and crimson hood, she paused on the threshold. I rose to meet her.

"Come in, Miss Gaylord; I am glad to welcome you."

"Where is your mother?"

"Gone to the village with Effie. Let me take off your wraps, will you?"

"Indeed, I ought not to stay, Mr. Green; papa was going for a ride, and will be back at eight, and will take me home then. I called to say good-bye, Mr. Green," said she in a subdued voice; "I am going away to-morrow. We sail for Australia the first of February. Papa has business there which will detain him there for some years and he wishes me to go with him."

"Bon voyage. May Heaven prosper you."

I gave her my one hand. She laid hers in it, cold and trembling, and our eyes met. There were tears on her cheeks. They dropped down and fell on our clasped hands. A wild, beautiful hope sprung up in my heart, and yet hardly a proper move of a revelation.

"Oh, Adele, have I found life's sweetness to lose it for ever and ever? Would to Heaven I were well and strong once more!"

"And what then?" she said softly.

The next moment I held her in my arms.

The Recall

PAMELA stood in the centre of a low, square room in the "Heavenly Mansions"—large white buildings, with marble staircases, and flats in which only the wealthy could indulge.

The green lights in lily-shaped globes of electricity, held by a bronzed figure on a pedestal, cast a ghastly shadow over her face. Perhaps she was fatigued with the excitement of gambling, which had killed time for a set of worldly men and women, after a luncheon party at Pamela's, that Sunday afternoon.

The day being dull, they had called for lights; money chinked, and cards passed, while eyes grew greedy for gain. The light laughter and chaff gradually subsided, and as Pamela proposed higher stakes, her guests caught the infectious eagerness. Though ill-fortune claimed her for its own, her ardour seemed undamped. She was not to be hampered by ordinary limits; yet a keen observer might have noticed that her hands trembled, and when the company rose to go she steadied herself by grasping the back of a chair.

One by one they bade her farewell, with murmured compliments and thanks.

"How charming you are, my dear!" cried a gaily-attired widow, imparting an airy kiss on Pamela's pale lips, "always the life and soul of everything. While *you* are in the world, there can be no such word as *ennui* in your friends' vocabulary."

"So kind of you to come," was the faint reply, and, as she spoke, Pamela fancied the room swam in a chaos of light and colour, while a sudden wind seemed to blow dust into her eyes.

"Your boudoir looks terribly dissipated," laughed Charley Elkin, scattering the cards on the floor. "There's an effect for you, Pamela! Stand in the midst of your fallen Kings and Queens, and pose as a new model for the 'Road to Ruin!'"

"Ha! ha! capital joke that!" laughed a red-faced army man, mistaking her tragic expression for a jest. "Here, Charley, my boy, give me some wine, and let us drink the health of our fair hostess."

She stood statue-like, as the speaker bowed low, and held up his glass.

"Will they never leave?" murmured a voice at her elbow. Pamela moved away quickly; it froze her blood. Yet to the man addressing her she merely appeared somewhat listless and indifferent. Gradually they straggled out, these society puppets, who turned night into day, and day into night, ignoring all lofty principles, and wasting every moment of their reckless, ill-spent lives.

"Pamela!" It was the same voice again, low and alluring. "Won't you listen to me now?"

Her wild despairing eyes read in the man's face a hateful fact. He loved her. Arnold Craven, with his boundless wealth and unscrupulous nature, was ready to lay it all at the feet of the woman who despised him. She glanced at her luxurious surroundings, but in the soft velvet draperies and costly furniture she saw only the black word "Ruin!"

In a few days Pamela Pemberton would be a bankrupt. The life of ease and pleasure faded from her sight, and poverty—grim, stark, inexorable—stared her in the face.

"Escape!" The word rang in her brain. Oh! blessed cry of harassed souls, who see the possibility within their grasp! "There are two roads," she said to herself, as Arnold Craven lingered alone, "two distinct roads, which lead away—away—from poverty and wretchedness."

Numb and pulseless, as though some invincible power had turned her to stone, Pamela walked restlessly to the window, staring down on the vast city. The mists of evening gathered thickly, spreading over church spires and gloomy roofs,

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steeped in the soot of ages. Involuntarily she stretched out her arms to the sky, fancying the densely-clouded heavens reflected her own misery.

The man watched her with eager eyes. "What is the matter?" he asked.

Pamela gave a short laugh.

"I was only looking at the world," she replied. "It is such a queer unreasonable place, and the sky, too—what an odd mixture of light and shade! In these days of rush and hurry, Nature passes unnoticed, unappreciated."

"You have a beautiful mind," he said, "and a sweet unselfish disposition, which is very scarce in this distracted age. Oh! Pamela, won't you give me a ray of hope? I have a right to plead my love!"

"Yes; I will hear you," she replied, with an effort at calmness. "I will hear you, Arnold, but not to-day—not to-day!" Her face set in rigid lines, and her breath came and went unevenly. "I am not well," she continued, pressing her hand to her throat, and speaking in a half-strangled whisper. "Please go."

He seized her hands, and kissed them passionately.

"May I carry away with me the one word—hope?"

"Yes," she replied, "hope always. It is the sap of life. When hope leaves us we are indeed desolate."

He tried to draw her closer, but she started back, yet concealing the loathing she felt. "Good-bye," she faltered, as he turned to go.

"When may I see you again?" he asked, pausing at the door, and devouring her with his eyes. "When will you make me the happiest man in the world?"

"When I ask you to return," she answered. "I shall give the sign, Arnold, and you will know then that I am ready to accept your—your offer."

She had intended saying "love," but the word stuck in her throat.

He bowed his head and left her, still with the same wild look on her face.

"Love," she muttered; "his love and his money. It would be easier to pass through the eye of a needle than to——." She broke off with an exclamation of disgust, and, leaning her elbows on the mantel-piece, gazed with a sense of horror in the mirror.

Her colourless lips were parted, her cheeks drawn and thin. She had pushed a mass of waving curls far off her high white forehead, and pressed two burning hands against her temples. They were throbbing and racking with sharp, unbearable pain. Through the open window chimes of evening bells reached her ears.

"I am weather-beaten with the storms of life," she said mournfully, listening to the monotonous ticking of the clock, for the loneliness of the room oppressed her. She was very cold, but did not move to close the window, though the air blew in upon her.

It was bleak, dark, and rainy without.

Suddenly an expression of exquisite tenderness stole over Pamela's face, at some recollection of her lost girlhood. Her eyes softened, while an infinite pity beamed in their depths for her own misguided career. But it was only for a moment, and then the memory of those two roads leading in such opposite directions returned with redoubled force.

Rousing herself, she opened a drawer, taking something small and heavy from a leather case. It lay a moment in her grasp, then fell from Pamela's trembling fingers. With a cry she clasped her hands before her eyes, and drew herself cowering to the further side of the room. She watched it lying on the hearthrug, her wide open eyes strained and bloodshot, her lips parted with overmastering fear.

The pale electric light gleamed in the dying day, as a weak, exhausted woman decided upon the road.

Someone below commenced playing the soft, slow music of a waltz. Breathless and panting Pamela rushed to the door, and whistled down to inquire if Mr. Craven had already left the building. Only a few moments since they parted, yet to her hours had elapsed.

"No."

The answer sent a thrill through her. Had he expected this recall?

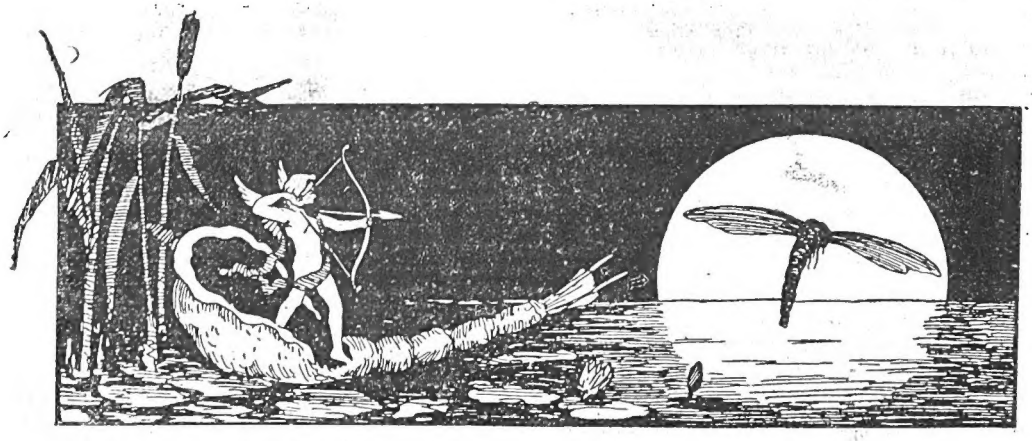
"Ask him to come up," she said.

Then Pamela walked across the room, her trailing skirt brushing the fallen cards, and snatched that "something" off the hearthrug.

In the meanwhile Arnold retraced his footsteps, enraptured at the message. The woman he loved had called him back of her own free will, and his longing, hungry heart beat high with feverish expectation. Already in imagination he could feel the fragile form in his arms, and the touch of warm lips on his forehead. She had given the promised sign and relented—at last! at last!

He heard the swinging, dream-like waltz below, as he approached her door—a languid three-time melody, and his happiness was such that he knew not of care in the present, or a soul to be saved in the future. He would have suffered years of anguish for this one moment's anticipation, as he burst into her presence with a half-smothered cry of joy—"*Pamela!*"

The word rang out in the silence of that awful room, while Arnold Craven recoiled shuddering from the sight which met his startled gaze. The rigid figure of a woman lay stretched upon the hearthrug, grasping a revolver in one hand, and the page of Pamela's life had closed for ever.



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THE OUTLAWS' TREASURE.

Illustrated by MR. A. KEMP TEBBY.

SUMMARY.

The mail train has been robbed between Cornwall and La Grange stations, and £20,000 worth of gold stolen by a gang of desperadoes, headed by two brothers named Mulligan. Two passengers on the train—Adolph Squirrek, *alias* Smith, a detective tracking the Mulligans, and Fred Weldon, a young lawyer—who have struck up an acquaintance on the way, alight at Somerville, where the former stops at the "Drover," and the latter at his mother's house. During the night a message comes to say that Judge Woodland's horse has come back alone, and Weldon, together with Squirrek and two other men set out to find him, and discover one of Mulligan's confederates lying senseless on the road.

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

GREAT were the amazement and relief of the four men when they found that instead of the body of Judge Woodland they beheld that of one of the outlaws. A brief examination showed that he had been struck upon the side of the face and terribly bruised, and a closer examination revealed that the bruise had been made by the hoof of a horse.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Fred Weldon, looking up in the faces of his companions.

"It is a good sign, and affords more grounds for hope than anything that has happened since his absence."

All the three looked inquiringly at the detective.

"This villain has attacked Judge Woodland, with the purpose of killing him, and while the affray has been going on, the horse has had a hand, or rather a foot in the matter, and knocked this dog out of time entirely."

"But where is he?"

"That I cannot tell. We can't do anything for this scamp at present, so you may lay him down by the roadside, and you may keep watch of the horses, while Weldon and myself take a look further down the road."

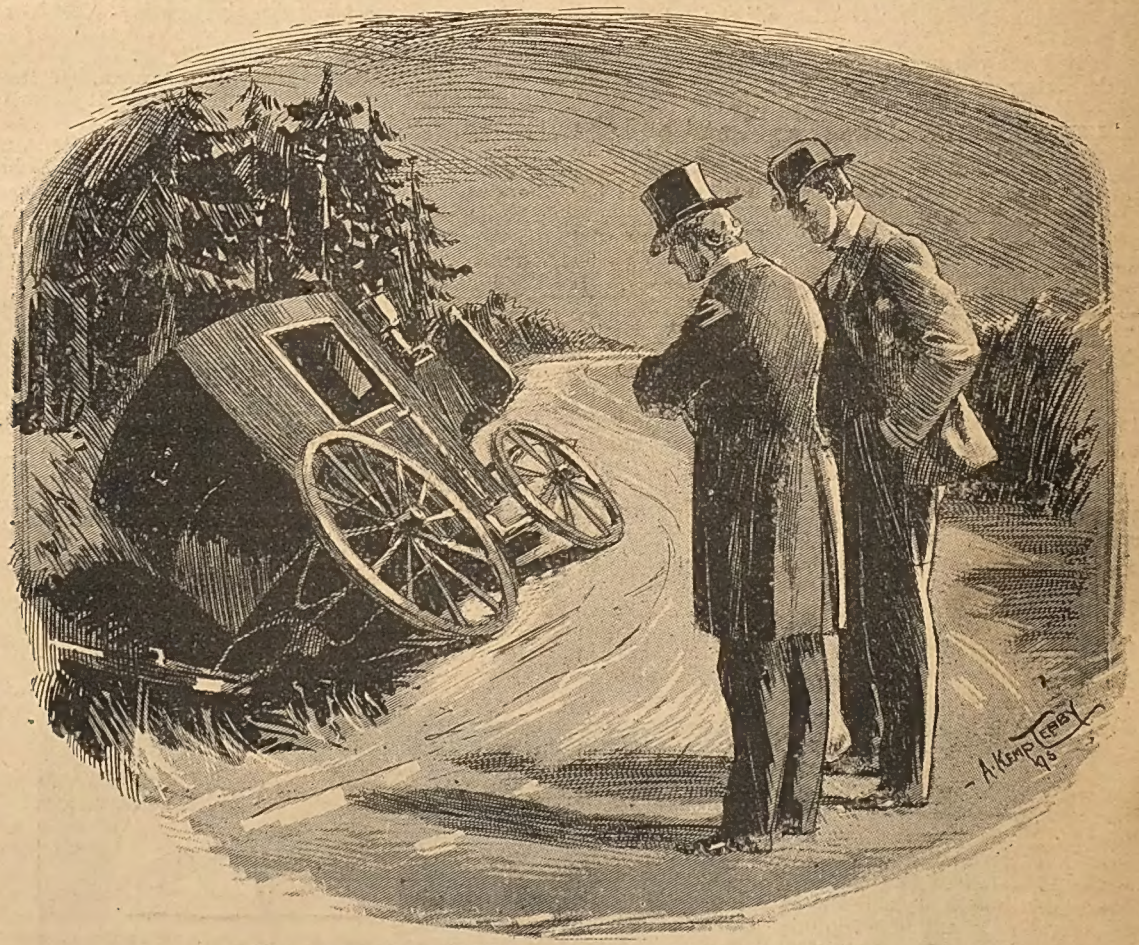
The two men walked quietly along, speaking in a low tone.

"I only fear that some more of the gang are near," said Fred, "and they may steal a march upon us."

"There is not one of them in the vicinity."

The confidence with which this was uttered reassured the young lawyer, and satisfied him at the same time that the man was more than he suspected him to be.

"Don't trouble yourself any further with speculations re-



They came upon the wreck of the carriage, lying in a heap at the side of the road.

garding *me*," said the detective, with a smile, as if he read his thoughts. "Call at the hotel to-morrow, and I will have something to say to you. At present we must attend to the business before us."

A few steps further, and they came upon the wreck of the carriage, lying in a heap at the side of the road.

"That will tell the story!" exclaimed the detective, moving towards it. "Not too fast, or you will hide the evidence by

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your foot-prints. Suppose you remain still, and let me look round for a few minutes?"

Fred gladly did this, and the detective made a long and careful examination, walking so far from the road that he was lost to view for nearly half an hour. When he came back he went to the battered hulk of the carriage again, all the time never exchanging a word with the wondering young man, who was intently watching his movements. Finally he finished.

"And what have you learned?" inquired Fred.

"All!" was the reply, uttered with a confident smile; "let us go back to where our friends are waiting, to save telling the story twice."

"The way of it was this," said the detective, when the four men stood together again, "but in the first place oblige me with a light, as my cigar has gone out."

The Havanna was deliberately lit, and the detective proceeded:

"Judge Woodland was delayed yesterday very much beyond the time he anticipated getting home. It was late in the evening when he drove through these woods, and he overtook a man on foot, who asked to ride. This man was the groaning scamp who lies out there, and he was waiting for the purpose of killing the judge; and I shouldn't wonder if this outlaw was the very one you speak of as having been rather heavily sentenced by that functionary several years ago. Well, the judge picked him up, of course, and all went along quietly until they reached a point a hundred yards or two down the road, when the fellow drew a pistol and attempted to shoot the old gentleman. I think his weapon missed fire, although I cannot be sure upon that point, and the two grappled and rolled forward out of the carriage under the feet of the horse, which had been so frightened by the report of the pistol and the struggling that she let out with her feet, kicking the assassin, and freeing the judge from his troublesome parasite.

She observed that he took extra care in preparing his toilet.

"How far off did this happen?"

"Quite a way down the road. The mare has kicked herself loose and then dashed for home, and this man has crawled away for help, but has not been able to get far."

"But where is the judge?" inquired Fred Weldon.

"That is a question which I cannot answer positively. I consider it certain that he has not been killed, although he may have been hurt. My belief is that, if hurt, he is at the nearest neighbour's, and if not injured, he has gone home by a different route from the one he usually takes."

"What shall we do?"

"Go back home."

The advice of the detective was followed at once. The outlaw had ceased his moaning and lay quiet, as if listening to the remarks of those round him.

"Before we take him in hand we had better make an examination," said the detective, and, stooping over, in common parlance, "went through" him, discovering two pistols and an immense bowie-knife.

"We may as well take charge of these, as they're not very good medicine for a well or sick man, and this dog may take it into his head to recuperate a little on the way."

The body was lifted unresistingly upon the horse in front of the officer, and the party started homeward. In the course of a mile they reached a farmer's house, standing some distance from the road, where they halted, and one of them roused up the people. Nothing was known of Judge Woodland, and the party resumed their way homeward.

Just as they struck into the main turnpike, day began breaking, and it was broad daylight when they reached Woodland's residence. All were anxious and nervous as Fred dismounted and walked to the door to knock.

Before he could do so he was encountered by Jacob, whose first greeting caused the heart of the young man to sink:

"Did you find the judge?"

"No."

"Of course you didn't," laughed the man, "'cause he came home last night."

"He did, eh? At what time?"

"About an hour after you left."

The detective, who had heard every word uttered, now indulged in a quiet smile as his words were verified.

"Was he wounded?"

"Not a scratch, but he was very tired, and I don't s'pose he will be up for an hour or two."

"Give him our compliments and congratulations, and tell him I will call during the forenoon to see him."

Fred Weldon's horse belonged to Judge Woodland, so he walked to Somerville beside the others. When they reached the main road, the prisoner made a desperate struggle to escape and well-nigh succeeded. But he was more firmly secured, and a short time after was placed in the county gaol at Somerville, while the three men separated to their homes.

Fred Weldon sought a few hours' rest, but woke again ere the forenoon was half gone, and, after eating his dinner, told his mother he would go over and see how the judge was getting along. She observed that he took extra care in preparing his toilet for the occasion, and she shrewdly suspected that it was not the old gentleman alone whom he was so anxious to see.

The truth of it was, that Florence Woodland was a star whom Fred Weldon had worshipped from afar. Beautiful and accomplished, she was the centre of admiration for more than a score of the leading young men of the town and neighbourhood.

Fred Weldon remembered her as the "bright particular one" of his childhood—the one who figured in his dreams of a roseate future, and whom, some day, when he had won the grand position towards which he had turned all his energies, he should claim as his bride.

But here the young lawyer was twenty-four years along life's pathway, and that glorious day seemed farther away than ever. The daily hand-to-hand encounter with the realities of life had sufficed to take a great deal of the romance out of his disposition, but it had not clouded the vision which still floated before him in his night and day dreams.

Outwardly calm and self-possessed, but inwardly faltering

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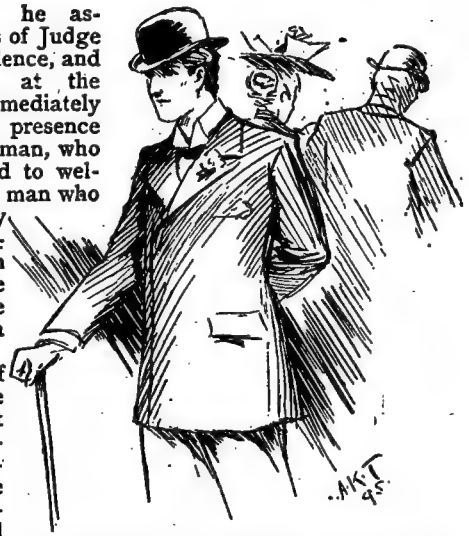
and distrustful, he ascended the steps of Judge Woodland's residence, and gave a knock at the door. He was immediately ushered into the presence of the old gentleman, who was heartily glad to welcome the young man who had been so ready to go to his assistance, and in whom, ever since his childhood, the judge had felt a warm interest.



With the pleasant words of Florence ringing in his ears.

The facts of the case were found to be almost precisely as stated by the detective. The judge had been delayed much beyond the time anticipated, and it was already dark when he reached the Ten-Mile Woods. Here he picked up a traveller, who attempted to shoot him, and would have done so had not his pistol missed fire.

The old gentleman grasped the man, and a furious struggle followed, terminating by the parties rolling under the heels of the mare, that kicked the assassin with almost fatal violence, and then broke away.

The judge easily disentangled himself and started homeward. He freely confessed that he was thoroughly frightened, and instead of keeping to the road, he travelled across country, wandering astray, and reaching his distracted household in the small hours of the morning.

The interview was very cordial, and when Fred bade the old gentleman "good-day," Florence went with him to the door, there took hold of his hand, and turning her deep blue eyes upon him, said:

"I thank you for your promptness in coming to us when we were in distress. To-morrow evening there is to be a gathering of a few friends here, and you must promise me that you will come."

"I promise you," replied the young lawyer, who felt that it would have been a pleasure to have promised his life under the circumstances.

CHAPTER VII.

AT JUDGE WOODLAND'S.

As Fred Weldon walked homeward from his visit to Judge Woodland's, with the pleasant words of Florence ringing in his ears, and with the delightful anticipation of fulfilling the promise made her, he unexceptedly found himself in view of the Drover's Hotel, and he recalled the engagement he had made with his friend, Mr. Smith.

A few minutes later they were seated together in the apartment of the detective, with the door securely locked.

"You probably have suspected my identity," said he with a smile, as he proceeded to light his inevitable cigar.

"I suspect you to be a detective."

"Correct."

And thereupon Mr. Squirrek proceeded to state as much regarding himself as is already known to the readers, and adding:

"For the present I am your friend, plain Mr. Smith, John Smith, if you so wish, travelling for my health, and as such you will remember to address me when others are within hearing. My sole object in this neighbourhood is to settle matters with these Mulligan brothers."

"Why do you make such a confidant of me?" inquired Fred, who thought the proceeding a rather unprofessional one, but who for all that was not a little flattered by the mark of confidence.

"Simply because I can't very well help it. However, if you have any objection, our intercourse can continue without anything further being said upon the matter," said Squirrek.

"Not at all; don't misunderstand me," Weldon hastened to say. "Upon a matter like this, I wish simply to understand everything, the preliminary steps as well as those which follow."

"Business is business," said Squirrek, in his easy, off-hand manner. "You will admit that my profession requires a tolerable knowledge of human nature. Not until I was satisfied of the timber of which you were made did I determine to take you into my confidence. I have been studying you ever since you caught my eye in the train, and the result is the satisfaction of knowing you are the man I want."

"State your case," said the lawyer.

"The man who succeeds in breaking up this gang under the leadership of the Mulligan brothers makes £2,000, and here is the man who is going to do it!" exclaimed the detective, slapping his hand upon his knee.

"I fervently hope so."

"But I want a partner, and you're the man!"

"Ah! I begin to understand."

"The last case that I was in was in Cincinnati, and while there I gained a thread which has drawn me into this."

"Have you undertaken it alone?"

"I have. There is not a living man who suspects my errand except yourself. I could have brought a dozen men with me, all of whom are used to this sort of business, but I prefer to select my material from this neighbourhood, and to follow out my own ideas."

"We two men against eight?"

"There are only seven," interrupted the detective.

"Three and a half men apiece. I don't see the prospect of success."

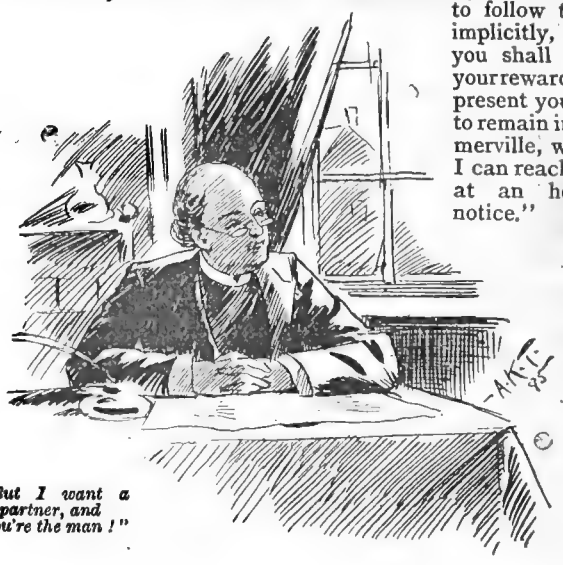
"The way isn't clear to me, but I have some experiments which I wish to make. Very probably we shall have to organise a vigilance committee, and it is hardly to be expected that we shall receive the whole reward ourselves; but there is no good reason why we shouldn't wind up the career of these scamps within a few weeks or months. Am I mistaken in conjecturing that some hundreds of pounds will not come amiss to you?"

"I rather fancy not," laughed Fred; "you might hunt a long time before finding one who would be happier to receive it."

"Precisely. Then the partnership of Squirrek and Weldon begins from date."

"I am willing. What is my first duty?"

"To hold yourself in readiness to receive my commands, to follow them implicitly, and you shall reap your reward. At present you are to remain in Somerville, where I can reach you at an hour's notice."



"But I want a partner, and you're the man!"

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"My intention is to spend a week here, at least."

"That is good! When I have anything to communicate I will see you. I presume I shall meet you at Judge Woodland's to-morrow evening?"

"Will you be there?" asked Fred, in pleased surprise.

"The Judge and myself are old acquaintances. I knew him when you were a schoolboy in this town."

"Does he know you are here?"

"Not at all, and I have no invitation to his party; but I shall go, nevertheless, and he will be glad enough to see me."

"Then he, too, will know your errand?"

"I think he has dealt with criminals long enough to be intrusted with a secret," said the detective, with another bland smile.

"No doubt of that."

The interview lasted half-an-hour or so longer, and then Fred Weldon bade his friend good-day and repaired to his home.

When he reached the residence of Judge Woodland on the evening of the following day, he found a large assemblage there, and almost the first thing that attracted his attention was the old gentleman and the detective sitting apart in the most cordial converse.

Florence Woodland received him with a warmth of manner which set his heart all of a flutter and raised his happiness to the highest point.

But the rose had its thorn, and the powerful emotion that had taken possession of him was alloyed by the sharp pangs of insipient jealousy. A tall, dark, and handsome Spanish-looking gentleman whirled past him, with his arm encircling the slender waist of Florence Woodland, and Fred felt as if he could have knocked him down.

But, when he was introduced to Señor Alvarido Almanaz, a gentleman from Cuba, he bowed low and expressed himself happy to make his acquaintance, although, at the same moment, he would have given anything in the world could it have sufficed to banish the noble señor to his home in the tropical isle.

"I believe I have seen your Cuban friend before," remarked Fred, when he gained the coveted opportunity of speaking a word or two to Florence.

"No! he is a stranger in Somerville."

"May I ask you where you first met him?"

"At the sulphur springs last summer. You know father always spends a few weeks there during each August."

"He seems to be quite a prepossessing gentleman."

"He is very accomplished—plays and sings beautifully."

"Is he staying in Somerville?"

"He is spending a few days with us. He was so kind and attentive to father when we were in Virginia the last time, that we urged him to make us a visit, and he surprised us yesterday by coming. I am so glad he arrived in time to be with us to-night."

A few minutes later and the señor was seated at the piano, running his long, jewelled fingers over the keys, while his really fine voice filled the room with music of a Spanish serenade. The whole company were hushed into silence, while the melody delighted their ears, and when he rose from the instrument there was a universal clapping of hands, and even Fred Weldon could not but admit that the plaudits were well earned.

The Cuban showed such marked attention to Florence Woodland that there were none who failed to notice it. He was a good dancer, and there was not a woman present who did not prefer him as a partner to anyone in the room; but, for all that, he appeared to see none but his hostess, and he followed her as the loadstone follows the magnet.

At the supper table he sat beside her, and when the night wore into the small hours, and the company began separating, the last couple dancing were he and Florence.

Fred Weldon was racked with jealousy. From being the happiest, he was the most miserable of mortals, and he felt like rebelling against the fate that had ever brought him and the fascinating girl together.

"And yet what right have I to any such feeling?" he asked himself, when he had time to collect his thoughts. "What claim have I upon her? There has never a word of love passed between us."

As he was ready to depart, he made a search for his friend Smith, the detective, and learnt that that gentleman had left several hours before, so he walked home alone through the still autumn night, his reflections tinged with a sadness he had not felt for years.

He was introduced to Senor Alvarido Almanaz.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIAL.

"FREDERICK WELDON,—You are hereby notified that if you appear as witness against poor Jim Borie, that got kicked by the horse when he was riding with Judge Woodland, you shall not live ten days longer. A word to the wise ought to be sufficient."

This was the missive our young friend received a few days subsequent to the social gathering at Judge Woodland's. It was placed under his door at night, and was given to him at the breakfast table by his mother. He read it carefully through twice, then placed it in his pocket, and finished his morning meal, without enlightening his mother as to its character.

Fred reflected that the captured outlaw, who was then lying in gaol, had so far recovered that he was to be brought to trial during the present term of the Court, which was then in session. Judge Woodland had so expedited matters that it would probably come on the very next day. Being a witness

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himself in the case, of course it was out of his power to preside at the trial, but there was little doubt of the conviction of the scamp, who richly deserved hanging.

A few minutes later Fred Weldon was closeted with Detective Squirrek, who, with his chair tipped back, his heels on the table, and a cigar between his teeth, scanned the missive as he would have done a bill of fare at the restaurant.

"What do you think of it?" inquired the young lawyer.

"It is a genuine document," he replied, as he turned it over in his hand, and looked at the back of it. "My young friend, that letter means business. Just so sure as you testify against that villain will your life be attempted."

"My heavens!" exclaimed Fred, as he excitedly walked the floor. "Isn't it a satire on a government? To think that a man cannot give testimony without his life being threatened!"

"Tut, tut, not so fast. There can be no form of human government that can prevent such things entirely. When you get to the top rung of your ladder, no doubt you will make all things right. Just now we have got to face the practical facts."

"If subpœnaed I shall testify, if the whole Mulligan gang stand between me and the court-house. I shall go about as I always do, and if I am assassinated, it will be done when I am asleep. I wonder whether Jim and Tom have been warned?"

"Yes; both received letters precisely the same as yours, and both have been so thoroughly frightened that they have gone away, and won't be back till the trial is over, so that *they* are out of this business, and, beyond the judge himself, you will be the only witness."

"But *you*?"

"Will not be subpœnaed."

"But you can tell as much and more than I can."

"All very true; and I asked the privilege of testifying, but the judge thinks it better for me to remain in the back-ground, as there is no real necessity for the statement of anyone beside the one whose life is attempted. That, you know, will send the man up for twenty years."

"After which, comes the journey to the state prison, when we shall have to run the gauntlet of the gang again."

"I think it can be done successfully this time. About this

"My young friend, that letter means business."

The black eyes of the Cuban seemed to burn into the young lawyer.

warning. I observe that the three are in the same handwriting, which is evidently a disguised one, and there is the curious fact that only the three who were subpœnaed have been warned. I, who certainly know as much as the rest of you, and who am as accessible, have received never a word. Rather singular, isn't it?"

"What does it indicate?"

"It looks to me as if those three missives were written in Somerville by some person whom we have met."

"Have you encountered any person who looked suspicious?"

Fred Weldon recalled afterwards that the detective avoided making a direct reply to this question.

"You must not suppose the eight, or rather the seven, as it now stands, are all rough, desperate-looking chaps, who herd together, and show to any countryman that they are outlaws. They may occasionally meet together, but I am well satisfied that some of them pass as gentlemen, and are never suspected of being anything else."

This was rather startling information, or rather conjecture, and gave Weldon a powerful realisation of the extraordinary power which this organisation of criminals wielded, and of the vast difficulty in bringing all of them to justice.

"Have you any particular advice to give?" inquired Fred, when there had been a moment's silence between them.

"Nothing; except that you must go to the trial to-morrow, and give your testimony in as straightforward a manner as possible."

"Will you be there?"

"Yes, I shall."

As a matter of course the court was crowded on the succeeding day to suffocation, and there were scores who were turned away, unable to gain admission. When the prisoner was produced, all eyes were centred upon him, for it would be impossible to tell how deep was the terror inspired by this association of men.

The prosecuting barrister, when he arose to his feet, showed that none held the gang in more abject fear than did he; and his speech of half-an-hour's duration was one of the most windy perorations, full of fury, and at the same time containing absolutely nothing.

The counsel for the defence was feelingly eloquent, for he was inspired by the most powerful motives which can sway an abject mind.

But the evidence could not be gainsaid. "Poor Tom

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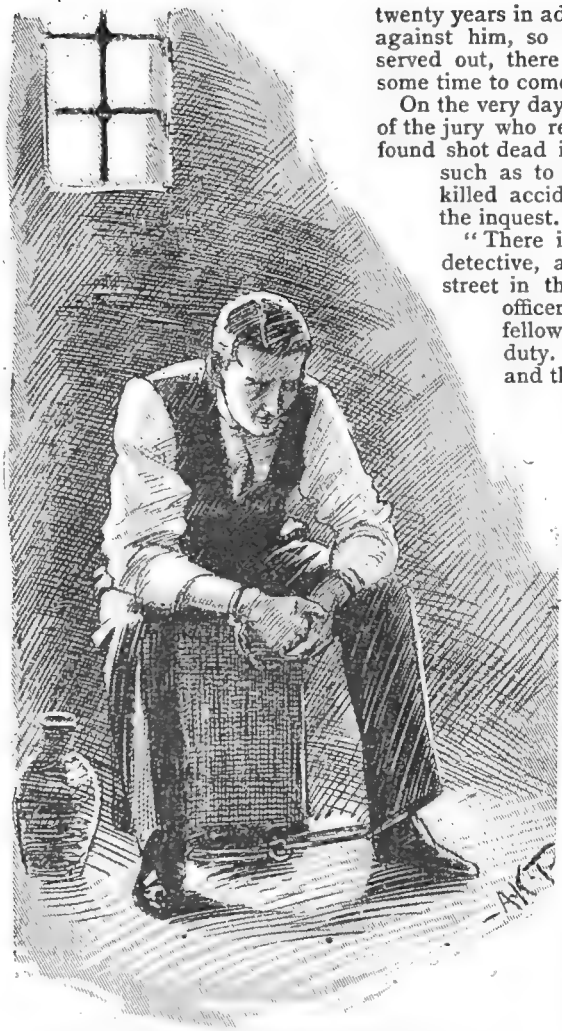
Borie" was positively identified as the one who had attempted the life of Judge Woodland, and he was further recognised as the identical villain who still had twenty years to serve for his having been rescued while on his way to prison before.

The judge's charge to the jury was so pointed that none of them durst shirk their duty, and they were forced to bring in the prisoner guilty, when he was remanded back to gaol to await sentence.

During the proceedings it became known that each member of the jury had received a warning letter precisely similar to that which had been sent to Fred Weldon and his friends. The detective managed to obtain a glimpse of several of these and found, as he anticipated, that one hand had written them all.

Among the spectators, Fred noticed two who manifested the most intense interest in the proceedings. One of these was Squirrek, the detective, and the other was Señor Almanaz, and rather curiously the two sat side by side. The black eyes of the Cuban seemed to burn into the young lawyer, and he bowed pleasantly to him, as their glances met.

There was nothing to be apprehended from an open attempt at rescue in a town of the size of Somerville; but there was reason to believe that everything would be done to get the outlaw out of gaol. Consequently the utmost precautions were taken. He was heavily ironed, and placed in the most secure cell, while the guard looked in upon him every half-hour during the day and night.



He was heavily ironed, and placed in the most secure cell

A few days after the trial, "poor Tom Borie" received twenty years in addition to the twenty which still stood against him, so that if the sentence were faithfully served out, there was very little to fear from him for some time to come.

On the very day that the criminal was sentenced, one of the jury who resided a mile or two out of town was found shot dead in a wood. The circumstances were such as to render it possible that he had been killed accidentally, and such was the verdict of the inquest.

"There is no doubt in *my* mind," said the detective, as he and Fred sauntered down the street in the gloom of the early evening, the officer smoking his Havana. "The poor fellow has paid the penalty of doing his duty. A little more of this kind of business and the whole country will be aroused."

"Don't you think the Mulligans are too wise to overleap the mark, and push things too far?"

"Their long immunity has made them careless. I think it will come to this in the end."

"They haven't made the attempt on *me* yet."

"That's no reason to think they will not do so. You may depend upon it, you are a marked man."

"Am I to remain here indefinitely through fear of these miscreants?"

"Not at all; I have been thinking to-day that it is nearly time you returned to your office at Brampton. But the time has hardly come yet. Wait a little longer. You will soon be swept into a current of events which will make your blood tingle with excitement."

"I do not understand you."

"I cannot explain at present," said the detective, slipping his arm into that of his young friend, as they turned to retrace their steps, and then he added in a low voice, and in a tone thrilling with meaning:

"There is a prize awaiting success of which you little dream."

(To be continued.)

THE MISSING FINGERS.

THE index and middle fingers of the left hand were missing. The two remaining fingers and thumb were well-formed, delicate and tapering. A palmist would have said that the formation of the hand denoted character.

Ethel Allen could not possibly have failed to notice such a hand especially as it lay on the *table d'hôte* of the Antrim Arms, immediately adjoining her.

Its owner manipulated his fork with singular grace and seemed to take pride in his three-digit dexterity.

The Allens, *en route* for the States, after a six months' tour of Europe, were giving a few days to the north of Ireland and the Giants' Causeway, and it was at the railway hotel at Portrush that they made the acquaintance of the Baron du Rhem, as the man with the missing fingers called himself.

The Allens were of that delightfully popular set of middle-class Americans that "do" Europe "regardless of expense," and keep alive in the minds of foreign hotel and shop-keepers the prevailing belief that all Americans are walking gold-mines.

Not only were the Allens—Mr., Mrs., and Miss—truly democratic in their tastes; they were positively bewildering in their habits and manner of making friends.

"I always judge a gent by his jewellery," was one of old Josiah Allen's maxims.

"A lady proclaims herself such by her dress," was an adage of Mrs. Allen.

And the daughter laid down her axiom: "If a young feller's well turned out, he'll do."

It was natural, then, that the Baron du Rhem, scion of the ancient and noble house of that name, should have made a most favourable impression upon these people.

The Baron wore diamonds and rubies, gems every one of them—a four-carat stone of matchless brilliancy on the little finger of the stumpy hand, a huge pigeon-blood ruby of perfect purity on the third finger of the sound right.

In evening dress the Baron flashed like a retired plumber of the comic weekly. His shirt-front was a sea of dazzling light, and the Baron's various chronometers, watch-chains, charms, jewelled cigarette and cigar case, called forth exclamations of

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admiration from Mr. Allen, who pronounced him the first foreigner of real distinction he had ever met.

Ethel thought the Baron just too sweet for anything. He had such a dear little broken-English, heart-breaking drawl; he was so courtly and chivalrous, so romantic and interesting, with his coal black hair and eyes, his classic Grecian features, and his poor maimed hand.

The two fingers, he informed Miss Allen, five minutes after exchanging common *table d'hôte* civilities, had been blown off by "the explosion of his fowling piece while hunting on his estates in the south of France." The gun had burst in his hands, lacerating two fingers so badly that amputation had been necessary, she told her father who was trying to understand him, but could not. The Allens were charmed, delighted with the Baron.

"He has the *genuwine* Burgundian look, Josiah," remarked Mrs. Allen to her husband, as they were preparing for bed.

"Bourbon, you mean, my dear," he timidly corrected.

"Oh, as you please, Josiah," she replied airily; "the words are *anonymous*. What a ketch for Ethel! Jest fancy our bringing back to Ditchfield a real live French baron of the old *reejyme*. He showed me some photographs of his chateaux at Nay in the south of France. He sighed as he showed them to me. I fear his estates are encumbered, Josiah: old ancestral mortgages. How few Americans can boast of mortgages a century old, Josiah!"

"He's a nobby little dresser, Maria; I never see such diamonds before."

"Baron," said Mr. Allen the next morning, as the two leant against the bar of the Antrim Arms, where they had been chatting with the barmaid for over an hour, "Baron, what do you say to a run across the pond with us? We all like you so much that we want you to make us a visit at Ditchfield. And, Baron," here Josiah Allen's voice sank to a confidential whisper as he softly dug the Baron in the ribs, "that gal of mine seems to think a lot of you. He! he! she told her ma so!"

"Indeed!" murmured the Baron, a pleased and amused smile playing about his lips as he stroked his piratical black moustache reflectively. "America! the great country I have heard and read so much about," he said pensively; "the land of the free and the home of the brave. You do me much honour, my dear friend, and it would afford me much pleasure to accompany you, but——"

Here the Baron made a judicious pause.

"But what?" impatiently demanded Mr. Allen.

"The fact is, my dear friend," went on the Baron, "I could hardly visit America—the land of the Anarchist and Socialist, the home of the Interviewer, the great American Reporter—in my true character. I should have to conceal my identity and travel *incognito*. If I could sail under your name—as one of your family let us say—a son or a very near relative, I might escape the disagreeable notoriety that would surely be attendant on the arrival of the Baron du Rhem in the United States. I have various reasons, my dear Allen; one, the best, is that I am connected with a political movement afoot, the instigators of which are supposed to be continually under the surveillance of the secret agents of the French Government. Here in the north of Ireland, at this little inn, I have permitted myself to be known to you by my true name and title; but on leaving this place I shall be forced to assume a different name and character."

"I think I understand you, Baron; you are more or less a political exile, and are endeavouring to keep your movements as quiet as possible in order to baffle the Government's secret service?"

"Exactly," answered the Baron.

"Well," said Mr. Allen, decidedly, "when we take the steamer at Queenstown you shall go on board as my son, Mr. Maurice Allen. Our quiet little home circle at Ditchfield will only know the Baron du Rhem, the last of the Bourbons."

When the *City of Madrid* took on the mails at Queenstown, the tender brought on board a number of passengers, among them the Allens, and their newly-found French friend, now known and treated as one of the family.

To the great surprise of the Allens, the first person they met as they came on board was young Treadwell Slote, of Ditchfield, one of Ethel's most ardent admirers. He informed them he had run over for a little trip, having guessed successfully a newspaper problem involving the placing of the first, second and third horses in the big race of the year—the prize being a first-class circular trip to London and Paris, with four weeks to make it in, the newspaper defraying all expenses.

"Well, you was always lucky, Treadwell," observed Mrs. Allen, and then she grew somewhat confused, for he was gazing curiously at the Frenchman devoting himself to Ethel, and Mrs. Allen did not know exactly how to introduce the two.

"Treadwell," said she, "he's the Baron du Rhem, one of the Burgundy people. He's *incog*. Call him Allen, for that is the name he has assumed travelling with us."

Slote looked at her in surprise.

"I don't quite understand," he said; but the introduction was forthcoming, and he bowed to the new Mr. Allen.

Young Slote was very much disgusted with what he termed their "gullible incredulity."

Whoever had heard of the Du Rhem family, or read of them? he asked. This man might be an adventurer for all they knew.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen put down these remarks as prompted by jealousy, and Ethel turned up her nose at him when meeting him on deck the next morning, giving him an awful snub as she passed clinging to the Baron's arm.

Slote was sitting in the smoking-room of the vessel an hour later, moodily meditating on the tomfoolery of the world in general, and his friends, the Allens, in particular. He was puffing away at his pipe in an exceedingly irritable frame of mind, when a fellow voyager entered to order a drink and enjoy a smoke.

The steward had taken his order, and left them alone.

The stranger sat down on the seat next to Slote.

"Pardon me," he said, "but I should like to ask you a question."

His manner and tone were so abrupt, business-like and brusque, that young Slote stared at him in perfect astonishment.

"Well, what is it?" he stammered.

"Are you travelling with a party on this ship by the name of Allen?" asked the stranger.

"No," replied Slote. "Why do you ask?"

"I thought not," pursued the stranger, with a smile. "And you are not acquainted with the Frenchman they have with them?"

"No, I never heard of him before," answered Slote, "but the Allens are friends of mine. Don't think me impertinent if I ask *you* what business it is of yours to ask me these questions?"

The stranger laughed, and for an answer took from out his hip pocket a small glass bottle. With both hands he covered its contents.

"There's a story inside that bottle. Would you like to hear it?" he asked.

Not knowing whether he was dealing with a lunatic, an inventor or a detective, Slote resolved to humour his *compagnon de voyage*, and replied that it would give him great pleasure to listen to what he had to say.

"I am the traveller and buyer for a large diamond-importing house," said the stranger. "My name is Lewis. About a year ago I was in Paris on business for the house I represent.

"You must know that we diamond men, who carry so many thousands of pounds' worth of precious stones about our persons, are objects of interest to criminals that play for big game and make diamond men a special study.

"A great deal of '*body*' smuggling is indulged in by foreign buyers, especially those that are 'in touch' with the Customs. I never trust stones off my person when travelling. As it is, at this moment, young man, I am lined throughout with stuff—to be declared, of course, duty to be paid; for it is a regular consignment I have with me.

"Well, a little over a year ago I was in Paris, and feeling as gay as that gay capital. I'd done a good stroke or two, and was leaving for Havre the next morning to take the steamer for home.

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"I thought one parting drink of Paris life was what I needed, so I sallied forth that night loaded down with my stuff, as was my wont, a revolver in one pocket and a sharp knife in a coat-pocket cut expressly for it. There's not a hotel-safe in the world I'd trust my diamonds in. I met a number of convivial friends and drank heavily—enough to make me reckless and forget that I had over £5,000 worth of stuff on my person.

"It was in some third-class café chantant that I met one of its singers. She left me alone in an anteroom where I had gone for a quiet drink, pleading sudden indisposition. I had already doffed my very valuable overcoat and thrown it on the only available article of furniture in the room—a low divan against the wall at the farther end of the room. The only precaution I took (which was an exceedingly lucky one, as subsequent events proved) was to remove my knife and revolver from their respective pockets.

"Presently a slight, creaking noise caused me to turn my head in the direction where my overcoat lay.

"Imagine my consternation to see a hole in the wall, and a hand inserted through it in the act of lifting my very valuable garment. You may have observed that I am a very quick man in my movements. It didn't take me more than five seconds to grab revolver and knife and make for that hole in the wall.

"They must have heard me, but secure as they thought themselves (she had locked me in the room), the owner of the hand—it was a man's—was deliberately slow in gathering my coat up, so slow, that in pulling his hand out of sight, he left two fingers on the floor of my room. I both fired and swished at the hand.

"The bullet missed it, but the razor-like blade of the heavy knife did its work.

"I shall never forget his yell of pain and rage!

"When I burst open the locked door and explored the place, I found myself in an almost deserted and unfurnished house.

"The room was the only one the panel workers had fitted up.

"I hastily left the house.

"In their wild flight they had failed to close the outer door.

"Wrapped in my handkerchief were the ghastly souvenirs of the evening's entertainment—a pair of fingers.

"I have kept them in spirits, in the hope of some day meeting their owner and returning him his lost property."

The narrator paused and tossed off the cocktail the steward had placed on the table before him.

"Didn't you inform the police at once?" breathlessly inquired Slote.

"Of course not. Had the story reached the firm's ears they would have discharged me—my reckless conduct would have cost me my position."

"Well, what is this story of yours apropos of?" asked Slote, a vague suspicion astir in his mind.

"Are you acquainted with the Frenchman who knows your friends, the Allens, so well?"

"No. I answered you that question once before. I don't know where they picked him up. He poses as a cousin of the Duc de Penthièvre, the son of the Prince de Joinville, who, you know, is a descendant of Louis Phillippe, the 'citizen King.'"

"Rot," said the diamond man; "you don't believe any of that?"

"Certainly not. Do you know anything of the fellow?"

"I know that two of the fingers of his left hand are missing, and I'll bet a ruby to a rhinestone that I carry the missing fingers in the bottle I showed you."

"What?" almost screamed Slote. "Are you crazy?" he demanded, staring hard at him.

"Wait and see," was the diamond man's reply.

"What do you intend doing?" asked Slote, excitedly.

"I shall tell him the story I've just told you, and I want you to watch his face while I do. Wait till we're off quarantine and the crowd's gathered in this room celebrating the quick passage we shall have made. Can I depend upon you?"

"Here's my hand!" cried Slote, and the two men shook hands and rang for drinks.

Young Slote sat at the captain's table with the Allens, directly opposite the Baron. That night he observed the mutilated hand very closely.

Just above the knuckle of the middle stump was a slight blue mark on the flesh that looked as if made by a tattooing needle—a slight, blue discoloration that on second thought could be attributed to the effect of an explosive.

The Baron was quite popular in the smoking-room with men of sporting proclivities. He played a stiff game of poker, and made up pools on everything one could guess.

Sandy Hook was passed, and the *City of Madrid* lay anchored off quarantine. It was long past midnight, but the steamship's smoking-room was a blaze of light and a flood of champagne. Lewis, the diamond man, had just roared out a toast: "Gentlemen, here's to the American Eagle! May he drop feathers all over the crown of Great Britain, and wipe his feet on the lilies of France!"

The Baron and a number of Englishmen took exception to this patriotic toast. A drunken brawl was imminent.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen! my friend will apologise!" cried Slote.

Lewis made some remarks to the effect that he had quite forgotten himself in his enthusiasm at getting back home again, and volunteered to tell a rattling good story to square himself with the crowd.

"Let's have it!" they roared.

The diamond man commenced his recital. Slote leant against a table where he could command a good view of the Frenchman who sat underneath the electric light by the side of old Allen.

The Baron's face preserved a sphinx-like expression until Lewis came to that part of his story where he described the room; then the Frenchman's face grew several shades paler, and his hand sought his trouser-pocket.

"At first I thought I was dreaming, gentlemen, when I beheld the hole and saw that hand—dreaming, only dreaming. The room was dimly lighted, and, as I remarked before, there had been nothing done to arouse my suspicions."

The Baron had risen, and was about to seek the deck.

"Wait a moment, let's hear this," begged old Allen; "it's excitin'!" and he pulled him down beside him.

Slote saw huge beads of perspiration gather on the guilty wretch's forehead.

He sank limply in a heap and thrust his telltale hand deeper into his pocket.

"My £5,000 overcoat was about to disappear, but my movements were so lightning quick that I slashed the keen edge of my knife across the hand just in the nick of time. What do you think I caught with my knife?" he demanded savagely of the trembling Frenchman, who cowered behind old Allen.

The Baron vouchsafed him no reply; he was deathly white and in a half-fainting condition. All eyes were turned upon him.

"I caught the contents of this bottle," cried the diamond man, flashing it out of his pocket.

"Here!" he shouted at the top of his lungs, his excitement making his voice crack, "here are the two fingers I lopped off, and which I have since kept in spirits as a living memento, as two silent witnesses to the truth of my story."

The Baron had fainted.

"Observe," said the diamond man, recovering his usual composure, "how the restored finger meets the blue mark above the knuckle, thus completing the base of the Maltese cross that is tattooed on the finger. I don't say this is the man that tried to rob me, gentlemen," he added, very quietly, "but he's helped to make my story a realistic one."

Slote, who was bending over the prostrate form, suddenly raised his hand for silence. "He's dead!" he exclaimed. "Heart failure is convenient, sometimes."

. . . . . .

The Prefecture of Police at Paris received the following cablegram from the Central Office Detective Bureau at New York a day later, "Man arrived *Madrid* dead. Property recovered."

When old Allen read the account of the clever French thief's wonderful career and numerous robberies in a New York newspaper, he remarked confidentially to young Slote, that "he never again should judge a gent by his jewellery."

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THE SENTRY'S STORY.

"TROFIM STOYAN," said the President of the Military Court, "you have been found guilty of the crime of aiding the escape of Prisoner No. 279 from the mine of Gorkaya-Balka. Before sentence is passed the Court desires to hear from you your version of the circumstances of the prisoner's escape, and the motives which induced you to be so false to the trust imposed on you. We understand that you dispute the correctness of some of the witnesses' statements. We warn you to speak the truth. Stand at attention!"

As the President finished, a slim young fellow, standing between two glittering bayonets, glanced round the spectators, drew himself up to attention, and faced the Court.

"Go on," said the President.

"Your Excellency," began the soldier, "I don't want mercy, and I don't look for it; but you have asked me to tell the truth, and I tell it. It was a Saturday night, snowing hard, and bitterly cold. Sergeant Petroff marched me up to the Gorkaya-Balka mine, and I relieved the sentry on duty there. I was to remain on duty until midnight, and I received the usual orders to stop anyone who attempted to enter or leave the gallery, and to shoot them if they persisted. I was shivering with cold, and kept tramping about in front of the entrance to keep warm. A little after the barrack clock had struck ten I noticed that there was someone crouching in the shadow of the old tool-house—a woman, I thought. It seemed to be darker there than out in the open. The snow was driving in my face. I felt queer and timid that night.

"Turning sharply round at the end of my beat furthest from the tool-house, I saw approaching me the figure of a woman, dressed all in black. I got opposite the entry into the gallery, and stood still. I don't know why I felt scared. There was no one else about, or nearer than the overseer's house. She came swiftly over the snow, and her face was covered with a veil. She came right up to me and threw back her veil. I couldn't speak; it was as if my tongue was frozen. She put her hands on my shoulders and looked up into my face."

"What was she like?" demanded the President.

"Your Excellency, I cannot describe her. I only saw her eyes then, and they were on fire and went right through me. She told me much that I cannot recall, for I was looking, not listening. But at last I understood her to be talking of her brother in the mine. She said she had come all through the snow from Russia to see him, and that he was dying. She said, if I would let her into the mine for a few minutes she would always pray for me, and devote her whole life to making me happy. Her great black eyes bewitched me, and I believed her. I said nothing, but pointed to the mine, and in a moment she had fled into the dark opening to the gallery.

"I never thought of what I was doing. I was dazed, and stood stock still; and the snow kept falling all the time, and the night was growing darker. I had my eyes fixed on the entrance and saw the figure emerge and run towards me.

"'Soldier,' she said, 'you have made me happy for life; make yourself happy and fly with us. Let my brother pass. I will lead you and him to a place I know of where we will all be happy together. Be good to me, soldier, and I will give you all you ask from me. I'll be yours. I'll live for you, and die for you.'

"Don't smile, Excellency. I was intoxicated with her words. I believed her. Her arms were round my neck, and her face was lovely as the Madonna's. I seized my rifle and flung it with all my strength out into the snow. She put a file into my hands, and I followed her into the gallery. There the darkness was thicker still, but we groped our way to where a man stood chained to a thick wooden stanchion. I knew what to do. The man said nothing, but the woman kissed me; kissed me, Excellency. So I worked like a madman. He was soon freed. We reached the entrance as the barrack clock was striking eleven. There was a whole hour yet before the guard would be changed. We ran through the little wood and crossed the frozen river; and away beyond a wide open space, where the snow was very deep, we entered the pine woods. The woman knew where she was leading us, for we came to a little hut, where we found clothes and food. I buried my uniform in the snow.

"All that night we moved rapidly through the woods, hardly speaking to one another at first. But the man and woman went on in front, walking arm-in-arm, and often they kissed one another, laughing and crying in turns. When I was close to them they sometimes spoke French. As soon as it was a little lighter, I never let my eyes leave her face. Her eyes were large and dark, and her hair was like gold, and hung down her back wet on her black *shouba*."

"Stand at attention!" said the President, sharply.

The prisoner stood erect again, and resumed—

"The morning was clear and frosty. The man had fallen several times during the night. His strength was gone. I saw he was as pale as death, and blood oozed from his mouth. The woman grew frantic with fear that he would be caught. The man, however, could go no further. He lay down on the snow, just as we were leaving the woods and coming out on the steppe. I thought he would have died.

"I took him in my arms and carried him. I carried him verst after verst, until my own strength was all gone, and I felt fever come over me. But the woman never noticed me, and once or twice when I turned to look at her from under my burden, I saw that her eyes were fixed on the face of the man I carried. I could hold out no longer. I fell on the snow and fainted. How long I lay there I cannot say. Whether or not I dreamt I am unable to tell the Court. I don't think it could have been a dream. I thought I saw a *troika* come noiselessly over the snow, and heard the breathing of horses."

The President interrupted. "Do you mean to tell the Court this was a dream? Can you give no further particulars about the *troika* or its driver?"

"No, your Excellency; the horses were black, I thought, and I know their eyes shone brightly; the sledge also seemed to be black. It came silently, it went away with gently ringing bells, like silver bells. When I came to my senses it was again snowing fast. The wet flakes wakened me, I think. I gazed around me on all sides. I was alone. I thought of my dream. There were no hoof-marks, no traces of sledge-runners, nothing but the level, trackless snow. Perhaps the snow had filled up the track, perhaps—perhaps there was some other reason.

"Your Excellency, I felt myself forsaken. I could not understand it. I was mad, and cried aloud. Suddenly I noticed, pinned to my coat, a scrap of paper with pencil writing on it. It was taken from me when I gave myself up, but I'll never forget the words: 'We cannot take you with us further. Save yourself as best you can. My husband and I will always pray for you.' Oh, Excellency, I saw it all then, and sat down in the snow and wept. I loved that woman. Yes; I was a fool."

"And a traitor," interrupted the President.

"And a traitor, if your Excellency says so; but I did not think of that then. I thought only of my love, of how I had been betrayed, of the wound to my pride. Your Excellency knows the rest."

"The sentence of the Court is that Private Trofim Stoyan take the place of the escaped Prisoner No. 279 in the mine at Gorkaya-Balka. He will remain there during the pleasure of His Imperial Majesty."

That evening he was chained to the stanchion.

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SUMMER HEAT AND OBESITY.

Summer with its sultry heat, is not a source of unmixed pleasure to those who suffer from excessive corpulence. Health cannot be maintained under conditions of great obesity. In general the mental energy of the highly corpulent becomes impaired, and their capacity for the conduct of business is consequently much diminished. Our readers will therefore be interested to know it is an indisputable fact that excessive corpulency can, in all cases, be cured by the system which has now for many years been successfully practised by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. Mr. Russell possesses hundreds of testimonials from persons in all classes of society, many of them holding distinguished positions in the learned professions and in Her Majesty's services, which, taken collectively, prove to a demonstration that anyone suffering from obesity who systematically applies his remedy for a few weeks consecutively can be cured. The patients under his treatment are not asked to be "fasting men"; and it is remarkable that in the case of many of Mr. Russell's subjects their appetite increases as their weight diminishes. A book (256 pages) entitled "Corpulency and the Cure," containing most interesting and trustworthy information, *together with the recipe*, may be had by writing to Mr. Russell, enclosing 4d. stamps for postage. With such a remedial agent at their command as Mr. Russell's specific, excessively corpulent persons have only themselves to blame if their unwieldy persons are not speedily reduced to fitting proportions.—*Extract from a Leading Journal.*

TO METAMORPHOSE FAT PERSONS

"We were reading in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* how to reduce obesity, wherein it says in that very excellent publication: 'The corpulent will be glad to learn how to lose two stone in about a month with benefit to health, strength, and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular fact that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state with increased activity of brain, digestive, and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto; yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight one to two pounds daily, as the weighing machine will prove. The Book, "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), containing the "recipe," can be had gratis from Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., by sending cost of postage, fourpence.' He has discovered a simple herbal remedy, most pleasant to the taste, which entirely disposes of the necessity of starving oneself in endeavouring to be rid of all superfluous matter. An interesting point, which goes to prove that the almost magical compound is beyond doubt harmless, is that in prescribing it in a tentative way to lean persons, or rather to those who carry no superfluity of fat beyond that which is required as fuel for Nature's furnace, the medicine is absolutely inoperative, attacking only that unhealthy, disease-creating waste accumulation which is the burden of the fat creature's existence. In many cases where people take decoctions reputed to be new medical discoveries to cure some specific disease, they may recover by the action of the medicine, or Nature may have effected her own cure. In the case of corpulency, if a simple remedy undertakes to reduce a person, say, 7 lb. in a week, all that one has to do is to get weighed, and thus prove it conclusively. So it is with Mr. Russell's compound, but he asks you to prove it in twenty-four hours only."—*Coventry Standard*, January 18, 1895.

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BETWEEN INCOME AND OUTGO.

TRY to fancy this, now. You and I are standing side by side in some country place, on the shore or margin of a little pond. At one end of this pond there is an inlet, at the other an outlet. The water runs in, the water runs out, equally, evenly. The constant gain, the constant loss—with the pond—the product of both, lying quiet between. So Nature balances all things, only you don't observe it.

Well, you say, what of it? Very much of it as you will see if you read on a bit further. Here, for example, is a trifle of personal history told by a lady whose name will be found at the end of it. It is a story of pain at first. We name this so you can drop it now if you don't like such tales. But you would better go on with it.

She says she has—or had up to a certain date—suffered all her life from illness. Her feelings were the same as the feelings of millions—your own for aught we can tell. She felt tired, weary, and heavy. Her mind was burdened also, as if some coming evil had cast its shadow before. Her skin was sallow, and the whites of her eyes turned yellow. She had an abiding sense of sickness at the stomach, pain in the *right* side, and spat up a watery fluid. She had no desire for food, and when (as must be) she took any it seemed to cause pain, and tightness at the chest, and under the shoulder-blades.

This was often so bad that the poor woman actually regarded her meals with terror, as though bread and meat were deadly poisons, instead of being among the most precious gifts of God; so for days together she fasted through fear of them.

From this came weakness, of course, we see. She could hardly pull herself upstairs, and her breathing was short and laboured. After a little she got nervous and irritable, and trembled and shook all over, so she says, and we believe it easily enough. At night, when we all ought to be sound asleep and sweetly dreaming, this woman tossed and tumbled on her bed. There was no gentle spirit to seal *her* lids, and so she felt more tired in the morning than when she lay down hours before. Time ticked along and brought no comfort nor betterment. She took medicines, lots of them, but couldn't point to any good they did. Doctors? To be sure. It's always that way. The doctors have the first chance to show what they can do. "I consulted several doctors," says the lady. Did they help her? They should; it's their business. Alas, however!

In this case they failed, as they so often fail. "They gave me no relief," she tells us. Why not?

Her narrative concludes thus: "On August 18th, 1887, whilst living at Wakefield Street, Gray's Inn Road, I went to the Royal Free Hospital and was under treatment there for six weeks. Afterwards, in 1888, I attended the Waterloo Road Hospital as an outdoor patient for two months. Several doctors there said I was suffering from liver complaint, but *their physic did not do me the slightest good.*

"In this condition I continued until August, 1889, when I made my first trial of Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. The first bottle relieved me, and I kept on taking it. Soon my food agreed with me, and I knew no more sickness or nervousness. My spirits were good and I felt better than ever I did in my life. From that time I have had no return of my old complaint. I will gladly answer any inquiries.—Yours truly, (Signed) (Mrs.) Annie Palmer, 9, Lambeth Palace Road, London, S.E., July 18th, 1892." Wife of Mr. George Palmer, Grocer and Provision Dealer.

One word more about that pond. The human body is like it, being composed of, and sustained by, the food we eat. When the food is properly digested, and the useless portions carried away through the organs of outlet, we are in health. When either fails we fall ill and may die. This failure is indigestion and dyspepsia. It was Mrs. Palmer's ailment which the doctors treated in vain and Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup cured. This medicine helps Nature to restore her lost equilibrium, leaving the body safe and strong between its income and its outgo.

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